

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 EUR-12 EA-10 NEA-10 IO-13
ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 HA-05 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 PRS-01
PA-01 /120 W
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R 161741Z NOV 77
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3134
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ICFTU, ILO, ELAB
SUBJ: ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING NOV. 23-25: A PREVIEW

REF: BRUSSELS 14844 (NOTAL)

1. THE ILO CRISIS WILL BE A MAJOR ITEM ON THE AGENDA OF

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU) WHEN IT CONVENES NOV. 23 TO 25 IN BRUSSELS. ACCORDING TO ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY OTTO KERSTEN, ILO DIRECTOR GENERAL FRANCIS BLANCHARD IS EXPECTED TO ATTEND AN EXECUTIVE BOARD SESSION ON NOV. 23.

2. IN A BRIEFING FOR FIVE BRUSSELS-BASED LABOR ATTACHES NOV. 15, KERSTEN SAID THE ICFTU BOARD WILL DISCUSS A STRATEGY OF IMPROVING THE ILO IN A WAY THAT MIGHT EVENTUALLY PERSUADE THE U.S. TO RETURN. THE KEY POINT IN THAT STRATEGY, HE SAID, IS TO GET THE JUNE 1978 ILO CONFERENCE TO ADOPT A HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT (ON THE APPLICATION OF ILO CONVENTIONS TO SPECIFIC COUNTRIES) THAT THE 1977 CONFERENCE REJECTED.

3. THE PREVAILING MOOD IN TRADE UNION CIRCLES, KERSTEN CLAIMED, IS ONE OF DETERMINATION TO CORRECT THE ABUSES THAT HAD CAUSED THE U.S. TO WITHDRAW. KERSTEN, JUST BACK FROM A SERIES OF MEETINGS IN GENEVA, SAID THAT HE HAS FOUND NO BITTERNESS OVER THE U.S. DECISION, EXCEPT AMONG SOME OF THE ILO CIVIL SERVANTS WHOSE JOBS ARE IN JEOPARDY.

4. KERSTEN SAID THAT IT IS "VERY, VERY IMPORTANT" THAT THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT, WITH THE FULL APPROVAL OF THE ISRAEL LABOR FEDERATION HISTADRUT, HAS DECIDED TO REMAIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE ILO. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, KERSTEN SAID HE KNOWS OF NO GOVERNMENTS THAT ARE PLANNING TO FOLLOW THE U.S. OUT OF THE ILO, ALTHOUGH PREVIOUSLY THERE WERE "RUMORS" THAT AUSTRIA, AUSTRALIA, JAPAN, AND SINGAPORE WERE PLANNING TO DO SO.

5. THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, ACCORDING TO KERSTEN, WILL ALSO HEAR REPORTS ON THESE SUBJECTS:

(A) RELATIONS WITH AFL-CIO. IN REGARD TO REPORTS ABOUT THE AFL-CIO'S REAFFILIATION TO THE ICFTU, KERSTEN SAID THAT "THERE MIGHT BE A CHANCE THAT THEY WILL COME BACK," AND THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE AFL-CIO HAS SET UP A COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE QUESTION. HE RECONFIRMED THAT HE HAS ACCEPTED AFL-CIO INVITATION TO ATTEND ITS CONGRESS IN LOS ANGELES NEXT MONTH, AND SAID THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF MANY ICFTU AFFILIATES--BUT "NOT THE BELGIANS"--WILL ALSO BE THERE.

(B) RELATIONS WITH WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR (WCL). AFTER STUDYING THE RESULTS OF THE RECENT WCL CONGRESS (REF A), KERSTEN BELIEVES THAT IT IS "NEEDLESS TO TRY TO

GET TOGETHER" WITH THE WCL, AND THAT COOPERATION WITH
THE WCL HENCEFORTH WILL PROBABLY BE VERY LIMITED.

(C) SPANISH LABOR DEVELOPMENTS. KERSTEN PREDICTED
THAT IN THE UPCOMING UNION ELECTIONS IN SPAIN, THE
ICFTU-AFFILIATED UGT WILL COME OUT THE VICTOR.

(D) PORTUGUESE LABOR DEVELOPMENTS. KERSTEN CALLED
THE LABOR SITUATION IN PORTUGAL "STILL SAD," BECAUSE THE
COMMUNIST-DOMINATED CGTP IS MANAGING TO KEEP ITS HOLD ON
WORKERS THROUGH AN "OLD FASCIST STRUCTURE" OF FRACTURED
LABOR UNITS (WITH SOME 25 TO 30 UNIONS IN THE METAL
SECTOR ALONE, FOR EXAMPLE).MORRIS

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